

Message Text

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PAGE 01 QUEBEC 00401 232149Z
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AMCONSUL MONTREAL PRIORITY

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, CA
SUBJECT: COMMENT ON QUEBEC 0400

REF: QUEBEC 0400

1. COMMENT: NEW GOVERNMENT HAS TRIED TO PROJECT A TAKE-CHARGE, ACTION-ORIENTED IMAGE MOVING QUICKLY ON MINIMUM WAGE, FRENCH-LANGUAGE LEGISLATION, AND DEFICITS AS WELL AS ABROGATING LIBERAL PRACTICES WHICH THEY HAD OPPOSED WHILE IN OPPOSITION. OPPOSITION PARTIES HAVE COMPLAINED - AND MANY AGREE WITH THEM - THAT GOVERNMENT IS TRYING TO DO TOO MUCH, TOO FAST, WITHOUT PROPER STUDY. IN DISCUSSING MONTREAL OLYMPIC TAX, LIBERALS HAVE ACCUSED GOVERNMENT - NOT UNEXPECTEDLY - OF BEING DICTATORIAL AND GOING TOO FAR WITH ABUSIVE AND ANTI-DEMOCRATIC LEGISLATION. COMMENTS SUCH AS THESE AND FILIBUSTERING TACTICS HAVE BEEN FOCUS OF EFFORTS BY OPPOSITION FORCES WHICH ARE STILL FEELING THEIR WAY.

2. WHILE GOVERNMENT HAS DEMONSTRATED CAPACITY TO ACT, IT HAS ALSO PROJECTED A CERTAIN CONFUSION. IN THE FIRST DAYS FOLLOWING THE CABINET'S NAMING, MANY MINISTERS WHO HAD LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 02 QUEBEC 00401 232149Z

BEEN RELATIVELY UNKNOWN WERE MAKING DECLARATIVE STATEMENTS ABOUT SUBJECTS WHICH THEY HAD NOT YET MASTERED OR WERE NOT EVEN TO BE UNDER THEIR MINISTRY. THEN CAME CLAUDE MORIN'S AND RENE LEVESQUE'S DECLARATIONS IN OTTAWA OF QUEBEC'S GOAL OF INDEPENDENCE WHICH SHOCKED SOME WHO BELIEVED TOO LITERALLY PQ CAMPAIGN PROMISES CENTERING ON GOVERNING WELL RATHER THAN

SEEKING INDEPENDENCE, NOT REALIZING THAT PQ VICTORY -
IN AND OF ITSELF - WOULD BRING INDEPENDENCE ISSUE BACK TO
CENTER-STAGE. THAT WAS FOLLOWED BY TROUBLE OVER DELICATE
PROBLEM OF LANGUAGE OUTLINED IN QUEBEC 0400 WHICH RAISED WRATH
OF ITALO-CANADIANS ONCE AGAIN AND LEFT ALL NON-FRANCOPHONES
WONDERING WHERE THEY STAND IN NEW QUEBEC. FINALLY, GOQ HAS
SEEMED SOMEWHAT VINDICTIVE IN ITS RELATIONS WITH MONTREAL.
MANY OF THESE PROBLEMS COULD BE DUE TO GROWING PAINS AS
PARTY IS GOVERNING FOR FIRST TIME AND/OR CAUSED BY PERCEIVED
NEED OF GOQ TO PACK AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE INTO SHORT
PRE-CHRISTMAS SESSION. NO DOUBT, MOVING FROM THE CAREFREE,
IDEALISTIC ORIENTATION OF OPPOSITION TO THE REALITIES
OF POWER, THE PQ IS STILL LEARNING ABOUT THE COMPLEXITIES
OF MODERN PROBLEMS AND THE LIMITS OF THEIR SOLUTIONS. HOWEVER,
IF GOVERNMENT DOES NOT MANAGE IN SESSION OPENING IN FEBRUARY
TO SEEM LESS ARBITRARY AND MORE DISCERNING OF THE IMPORTANCE
OF PEOPLE, INSTITUTIONS, AND RESULTING PROBLEMS, QUEBECKERS
MAY BEGIN TO DOUBT THAT THEY ARE GETTING THE COMPETENT,
CLEAR, AND EFFICIENT LEADERSHIP THAT PQ PROMISED THEM.
GARLAND

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